



**Remarks by  
MR. SHA ZUKANG  
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
TO THE CAIRO HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first to thank the distinguished Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Leo Mèrorès, and the Deputy-Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, for their stimulating statements and valuable contribution to our meeting.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Government of Egypt for making this Symposium possible. We, in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, have highly appreciated this opportunity to work closely together with our Egyptian counterparts. On behalf of DESA, I thank you. And I join you in welcoming everyone here.

This event marks an important step in the preparations for the first biennial Development Cooperation Forum, which will take place during the High-level Segment of ECOSOC in New York in July. As many of you know, the first symposium took place in Vienna last year, followed by the launch of the Forum at ECOSOC in Geneva.

Both the symposium and the launch demonstrated that the Development Cooperation Forum is able to attract high-level participation from both developing and developed countries. This is particularly important if the Forum is to play a meaningful role in advancing global dialogue and policy review on key issues of development cooperation.

This second high-level symposium focuses on three issues at the centre of debate on how to achieve a more equitable and productive aid relationship between donors and programme countries.

First is *conditionality*, long a topic of debate and controversy. Many stakeholders strongly believe that the use of conditionality distorts aid effectiveness. In Vienna, many programme countries stressed that donor perspectives and influence had led to the design of programmes and projects not in line with their national priorities. Donors are concerned that they respond to the needs of their taxpayers so that they can justify aid programmes at home.

The question remains as to whether conditionality has a place in an aid environment based on the global partnership for development. I hope this Symposium will consider how we can better understand and respond to concerns on both sides, while ensuring that aid can have a meaningful positive impact on the lives of ordinary citizens.

The second issue on the agenda here at Cairo is *the aid quality framework*. The present framework – the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness – has been instrumental in focusing work on key principles for effective development cooperation, such as alignment and harmonization. The symposium aims to generate ideas and suggestions on ways to further strengthen the existing framework, particularly to ensure equal and comprehensive ownership by both donors and programme countries.

I hope we will also hear from participants what specific role they would foresee for the Development Cooperation Forum in this process of strengthening the aid quality framework. We do not need a rival process, but one which is inclusive and complementary. How can we achieve this?

The third issue for the Symposium is *South-South and triangular development cooperation*. As valued complements to North-South cooperation, South-South and triangular cooperation for development are receiving growing attention and interest from various stakeholders.

This is evident, for example, in the recent outcome of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system development activities, which pointed up the need to better understand the approaches and potential of South-South and triangular cooperation. In my view, enhanced research on this front is essential, including establishing definitions and credible data.

The Development Cooperation Forum is seen by many stakeholders as being well-placed to foster an inclusive dialogue on South-South and triangular cooperation issues, within the broader objective of promoting greater coherence and effectiveness of international development cooperation. I very much hope that our discussion tomorrow morning will represent a positive start in that direction. We are fortunate to have here eminent representatives from UNCTAD, UNDP and Governments who will serve as invaluable resource persons for that discussion.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having highlighted our expectations for this Cairo High-Level Symposium, I would like to conclude this opening session.

My esteemed colleague, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, will now take the podium to moderate the first session.

Thank you.